

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 083757
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 SSM-05 ISO-00 H-02
PA-02 /056 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:WBHARRIS:DP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. NEWBERRY
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----071133 010236Z /63

O 010005Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 083757

AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
NSC WASHDC 0000
USCINCEUR
DOD

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - MARCH 31, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MARCH 31.
FYI ONLY, OFFICER PRESENT TODAY WAS JOHN TRATTNER.

Q. ON THE JET SALE, WOULD THE ADMINISTRATION BE WILLING
TO CONSIDER INCREASING THE NUMBER OF JETS TO ISRAEL AS A
MEANS OF ANSWERING ANY POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS FROM CONGRESS
THAT THE SALE ITSELF WOULD UNBALANCE THE MILITARY SITUATION
IN THE MIDDLE EAST?
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 083757

A. AS FAR AS I KNOW, THE PACKAGE AS PRESENTED AND ANNOUN-
CED IS THE WAY IT IS. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY PLAN TO CHANGE
IT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT SUGGESTION YOU MIGHT BE REFERRING
TO OR WHERE IT COMES FROM, BUT I DON'T KNOW OF ANYTHING
THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED ON THAT OR ANY LIKELIHOOD THAT WE
WOULD BE DISPOSED TO CHANGE IT.

Q. WHAT HAS BEEN SAID BOTH BY THE SECRETARY, AND I THINK
BY THE PRESIDENT, IN THE PAST HAS BEEN THAT THE PACKAGE
IS INTEGRAL AND WILL NOT BE SPLIT UP. HOWEVER, THEY
HAVE NOT ADDRESSED THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING ONE PART
OF IT.

A. THAT'S PROBABLY TRUE. NOBODY HAS SAID ANYTHING ABOUT
INCREASING ONE PART OF IT, BUT THE PRESENTATION OF THAT
PROPOSAL BACK IN THE MIDDLE OF LAST MONTH WAS
BASED ON A LONG, CAREFUL STUDY AND CALCULATIONS, TAKING
INTO ACCOUNT A VARIETY OF CONSIDERATIONS, AND I DON'T KNOW
OF ANY DISPOSITION ON OUR PART TO ALTER THE BALANCE OR
THE CONTENT OF THE PACKAGE. I'M NOT EXCLUDING THAT IT
COULD HAPPEN; I'M SIMPLY SAYING THAT I DON'T KNOW OF ANY
PLANS.

Q. THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW.

A. BUT BY SAYING THAT, I'M NOT EXCLUDING IT. I'M NOT INDICATING ANY READINESS THAT I'M AWARE OF TO DO SO.

Q. BUT IT IS NOT IMMUTABLE? IN OTHER WORDS, THE NUMBERS COULD BE CHANGED WITHIN THE PACKAGE?

A. I DON'T WANT TO GO THAT FAR. I DON'T WANT TO SAY IT'S IMMUTABLE, BUT I DON'T WANT TO SAY IT'S SUBJECT TO CHANGE EITHER. THE PACKAGE HAS BEEN PRESENTED AND I DON'T KNOW OF ANY PLANS OR DISPOSITION TO CHANGE IT.

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PAGE 04 STATE 083757

Q. FOR FUTURE SALES, WOULD ANY SALE TO THE MIDDLE EAST HAVE TO INCLUDE ISRAEL AND THE MENTIONED STATES LIKE SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT? IN ANY EVENT OF SUPPLYING ARMS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WOULD THEY SUPPLY THE THREE TOGETHER OR JUST ONE OF THEM IN THE FUTURE?

A. I CAN'T LOOK THAT FAR INTO THE FUTURE. IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO TELL YOU THAT. RIGHT NOW WE'RE DEALING WITH THE PACKAGE AS PROPOSED.

Q. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THAT AMERICAN STUDENT THAT IS IN JAIL IN ISRAEL, SAMY ESMail, FROM DETROIT?

A. ON THE ESMail CASE THE TRIAL HAS BEEN HELD OR IS PERHAPS STILL IN PROCESS. I'M NOT QUITE CERTAIN. I'M NOT SURE I HAVE MUCH IN ANSWER TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTION BUT THE DATES OF THE TRIAL. HE APPARENTLY HAD SIGNED -- I SAY APPARENTLY BECAUSE I'M NOT QUITE CERTAIN OF THAT EITHER -- TWO CONFESSIONS. WE EXPECT TO LEARN ABOUT THE COURT'S RULING ON THE VALIDITY OF THOSE CONFESSIONS SHORTLY. THAT'S ABOUT ALL I CAN ANSWER TO THAT PARTICULAR QUESTION.

Q. ON THAT DID ISRAEL EVER REPLY TO THE REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION INTO HIS CHARGES ABOUT BEING MISTREATED?

A. IT'S TOO FAR BACK FOR ME TO REMEMBER. I WILL HAVE TO CHECK IT FOR YOU AGAIN. I DON'T BELIEVE THEY DID, HOWEVER. CHARLES, DID THEY?

MR. SHAPIRO: YES.

Q. THERE WAS A REPORT THAT IN COURT HE GAVE HIS TESTIMONY
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PAGE 05 STATE 083757

IN CONTRADICTION TO WHAT HE HAD SIGNED BY FORCE. DO YOU
HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT?

A. I DON'T.

COOPER

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NNN

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